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## Deadwood Dick, Jr., at Dollarville;



OR, THE

## Irishman's Sweepstakes.

BY EDWARD L. WHEELER,  
AUTHOR OF "DEADWOOD DICK" NOVELS, ETC.

### CHAPTER I

#### HORRIBLE DISCOVERY.

#### DOLLARVILLE!

A curious name, and yet not a name unique. It can be found in the postal-guide, but the one there mentioned is not the Dollarville of our story.

This particular place was a rapidly growing

DEADWOOD DICK RODE WITH OTHERS STRAIGHT TO GORMAN'S COTTAGE.



"camp" of the far West—a town, in fact, and one of no mean importance, either. It was the center of a rich mining and ranching section.

It was early forenoon.

The main street of the young city was thronged with people.

Excitement prevailed, and the crowd was greatest in front of the bank building.

It was shortly after the usual hour for opening the bank. The discovery had been made that during the night the bank had been looted and the night watchman murdered!

No wonder there was excitement then.

The man to make the discovery was James Trillman, the cashier, when he came to open the bank for the day's business.

He immediately gave the alarm, and in less than ten minutes the street was black with people, in front of the bank, eager to learn the particulars of the matter.

Trillman had found the safe door wide open, and every dollar and cent of the cash missing. There was no indication that force had been used. And on the floor, between the safe and the door, lay the body of the watchman, a bullet in his brain.

Here was a mystery.

A man came hurrying down the street—a man for whom the crowd made room—and he made straight for the bank and entered.

He was about fifty years of age, of somewhat commanding presence, with white hair, and a close-cropped iron-gray beard.

It was Reuben Gorman, the bank president.

Let us enter with him.

Already a number of men had been admitted—the mayor of the town, the coroner, and several others.

"What is this I hear?" demanded the president, as soon as he entered. "The bank robbed? Peter Watkins dead? By Heavens! but this must be cleared up! Has any clew been found?"

"Not yet, sir," answered the cashier.

"How was the safe opened?"

"That is a mystery, sir. No force was used."

"No force used! And yet you say that it has been gutted completely."

"To the last cent, sir."

"Here, we must stop short. If there is a clew to be had it must be found. Send for the district attorney immediately."

"I am right here, sir," a man spoke up.

"Ha! So you are, Spraker. I want you to take charge of this thing and investigate it thoroughly."

"That is what I am here for, sir," said Mr. Spraker, stepping forward. "I am taking in all the points of the affair that come to light. We have a puzzling case, I am afraid, Mr. Gorman."

"No matter. You must sift it and clear it up. Take it right in hand, sir, and see what you can do."

Spraker was a small, spare man, with thin face and glittering eyes.

He reminded one of a weasel, having reddish hair.

"I can't do any more than is being done, sir," he declared. "Go ahead, you and Mr. Trillman, and I will take in any points that are brought out."

"We have touched nothing, sir," spoke up Trillman, addressing the president. "We have been waiting for you. The matter is so mysterious that we know not where to begin."

"How was entrance gained?" demanded Gorman.

"That has not yet been ascertained, sir," answered the cashier.

"Then it is high time that it was. Mr. Spraker, you must be our detective. Go to work."

"Very well, since I am urged, though

I do not lay claim to much ability in that line. I had rather that you would carry on the in—"

"You are too modest, sir. Make a start."

"Well, I will do so. Mr. Trillman, how did you find the front door?"

"Locked."

"And you came in without trouble—that is, did the lock yield to your key as usual?"

"It did, sir."

"And what did you discover first?"

"I saw, first of all, the door of the safe wide open, but in the very next instant I discovered poor Watkins."

"And you gave the alarm at once?"

"Immediately."

"Good! Now, how many keys are there to this safe? How many persons are supposed to know how to open it?"

"I have one key, and I know the combination, of course," answered Trillman. "Mr. Gorman is the only other person supposed to know how to open it, sir."

"Why do you say supposed?"

"I only repeat your word, sir; but, it is self-evident that somebody else has gained the knowledge somehow."

"That is positive," agreed the president.

"It is certain that neither Mr. Trillman nor I did the business, and the work before us is to find out who did. But, go on, Mr. Spraker."

"Who was the last to leave the bank last night?"

"I was," answered Trillman.

"And everything was properly secured then?"

"It was. I have always made it a rule to examine well before going."

"And what about Watkins? Had he no key?"

"A key to the door, certainly."

"I will see if it is in his pocket now."

The attorney stooped over the body of the murdered man and felt in his pockets, and the key was soon discovered.

"Is this it?" he asked, holding it up.

"That is it," assured Gorman.

"Then, as he was inside, some other key must have opened the door. You have your keys, each of you?"

"Certainly," and the president produced his.

The cashier thrust his hand into his pocket and brought forth his likewise, and held them up to sight.

"This, then, accounts for all the keys," said the attorney-detective. "Now, has anybody, to your knowledge, had opportunity to duplicate these keys? Have you ever seen any one monkeying around the locks?"

Neither could say that he had. It was a mystery indeed!

"Well, certain things are facts," said the attorney. "The bank was opened by some one having a key, and the safe was opened by some one who knew how to do it. I must question further."

"Do so, sir."

"Did you, either of you, allow your keys to go out of your possession last night?"

"I did not," answered Gorman.

"Nor I," the cashier, immediately after.

"Then there certainly must be a duplicate—an extra key—somewhere. By the way, Watkins could not have opened the safe, could he?"

"He could not."

"It might be offered that he admitted some one into the bank, and was forced to open the safe; but since he did not know how—"

"I cannot hear Watkins spoken of that way, Spraker," interrupted the president. "He was an honest, faithful employee, and he has given his life in the defense of our property, as you see."

"I was merely theorizing, sir. He might

have been forced, perhaps, and then cruelly murdered."

"Well, we have no proof. That is what we want."

"Let us look around for a clew."

The little attorney thereupon went forward to the safe, examining it with care and looking all around with close scrutiny.

Suddenly he uttered an ejaculation, stooped, and picked something up.

"What have we here?" he demanded. "Part of a sleeve button, as I live! Is it recognized? Does any one know to whom it belonged? I cannot say that I ever saw it before."

"Why, Trillman, it is yours, is it not?" asked the president, and he looked at the cashier as he put the question, only to find that the cashier had become suddenly pale. He had just examined his cuffs and had made the discovery that the part just found certainly belonged to him. That discovery would amply account for his paleness.

## CHAPTER II.

### TERRIBLY ACCUSED.

All eyes were immediately turned upon the cashier.

This he knew, and it only added to his confusion, if such it could be called.

"Y—yes, it certainly belongs to me," he said, stammeringly. "I was not aware that I had lost it."

"Maybe you lost it yesterday," the president offered in explanation. "I do not attach any importance to this discovery, Mr. Spraker, since Mr. Trillman is here every day of his life."

"Why, certainly, sir; while it is to be suppose that he lost it here, it does not prove that he lost it here last night—that he robbed the safe!"

He fixed his eyes upon Trillman as he spoke.

Somehow, the cashier could not recover from the confusion into which he had been thrown.

Everybody present watched him, and he certainly acted enough like a guilty man to make it noticed. Perhaps he was guilty; that remains to be seen.

"I—I certainly was not in here after I locked the doors last night," he managed to protest. "The button is mine, and of course I must have lost it yesterday or this morning."

"Quite likely," assented the attorney-detective. "You carry a pistol?"

"Yes."

"What caliber?"

"Thirty-eight."

"Will you let me look at it?"

"Do you mean to point suspicion at me, sir?"

"The contrary, sir. Your agitation has drawn notice to you, and I would aid you in forestalling the chance of suspicion resting upon you."

"I was naturally surprised at finding my cuff-button broken and the missing part where you found it, and I am of a nervous nature and easily moved. Here is my weapon. Examine it."

He drew a heavy revolver from his hip pocket as he spoke, and extended it to the attorney.

Spraker took it, and the moment he looked at it his face became serious.

He looked the cashier in the face again.

"I notice that one chamber is empty," he said. "It looks as if it had been recently fired."

"One chamber empty?" echoed Trillman.

"Yes; see for yourself."

The cashier was now pale to the lips.

"I was not aware of it," he declared.

"The shot was not fired by me, I will swear to that!"

"Well, it is not likely that any one else



could shoot it for you, I should say," remarked the attorney. "Mind, I am not saying when and how you fired it; but here is the empty shell."

"Trillman, what does it mean?" asked Gorman.

"Just what I would like to know, sir," was the response. "I will swear that my weapon was loaded full the last time I looked at it, and I have not had occasion to use it for months. The last time I fired it was at least three months ago, when shooting at a target."

"This is most distressing," said the little attorney, soberly. "Seems to me I have only helped you out of the mud into the mire, Mr. Trillman. I had no idea but your weapon was in order, and I meant to show by that that you certainly were not the man who killed Watkins, but now—"

"Confound you, sir! Do you mean to hold me for this crime?"

"Not by any means, Mr. Trillman, for it will no doubt be easy for you to prove that you were not near the bank after closing time yesterday."

"Mr. Gorman, you do not believe that I did this thing?"

"Certainly, not, Trillman; it is only a mishap that things have taken this turn. Mr. Spraker, give your attention to the case direct, and let this side issue drop."

"Excuse me, Mr. Gorman; but, as district attorney, I must make note of these things as facts in the case. Mr. Trillman has declared that he did not fire this shot from his pistol, and yet, here is the empty chamber. Suppose, now, that the bullet, when we get it, happens to be a thirty-eight—"

He paused, with effect.

"I don't like the looks of this thing," said the president. "You might as well accuse Trillman, and be done with it, Spraker. And you might as well charge me with the crimes as him."

"I am charging nobody, sir," was the quick retort. "Circumstances have appeared of their own accord to fix attention upon Mr. Trillman for the moment."

"With your help," the cashier muttered.

"You do wrong to anger me against you, sir," the attorney reminded. "I am desirous of helping you all I can, if you will let me."

"Yes, I see you are. Instead of wasting your time with me, get down to work and find the robber and murderer, and you will do something. Or, if you are going to arrest me, proceed."

The cashier's nervousness had given place to indignation.

"It is the thing I wanted to avoid doing," said Spraker, "and yet the circumstances warrant it. A part of your cuff-button found here on the floor, and your pistol minus one bullet. Indeed, Mr. Trillman, in the discharge of my office, I must order you held."

Everybody was shocked, for no one would have for a moment suspected James Trillman of the crime.

The cashier was still pale, but he was now cool.

"Very well," he said. "All I ask is, that you will push the case and get at the truth. Nobody will believe me guilty, and if you stop at my arrest you will give the rascal time to escape."

"No stone shall be left unturned, Mr. Trillman."

"And you propose locking me up?"

"Why, no; not until I am forced to do so, for no one would be more pleased than I to see you go free. The coroner must decide upon the merits of the case, and then we'll see what has to be done. I hope that something else will turn up meantime to clear you."

"I hope so."

The scene of the double crime was well searched.

Not another clew was to be found, and no further explanation was to be had at that time.

Meanwhile, word had been passed to the crowd without that Trillman was suspected of having done the deed, and, not knowing how slight the proof was, a good many of the crowd adjudged him guilty forthwith.

The next thing in order was the coroner's inquest.

This place called Dollarville was one where law and order prevailed, for it had long outgrown its "camp" period of progress.

Hence, the machinery of the law was ready to be set in motion in a case like the present. Here "Judge Lynch" had had his day. And yet, there was enough of the Wild West remaining, withal.

The bullet was recovered, and was put in evidence at the inquest.

It was found that it was of thirty-eight caliber size; and more, that it was of the same kind as those in Trillman's revolver.

There could be but one result. James Trillman was held for the murder of the night watchman, and was charged with having robbed the bank. But the majority of the people believed him innocent.

It was argued that had he done the deed he would have taken care to clean and reload his weapon just as soon as possible afterward. On the other hand, if guilty of the crime, he might trust to his high standing to shield him from suspicion, and the revolver would not be called into question.

But, there had come the misfortune of the broken cuff button.

There was no other clew; suspicion pointed nowhere else; and so it was that the cashier was held for trial.

He was lodged in jail, and all Dollarville was wild with excitement. This caused almost, or quite, as great a sensation as the first discovery of the murder and robbery.

The citizens were divided; the majority, and they were of the better class, held the cashier to be innocent, despite appearances. The other element were inclined to think him guilty, and the lowest class did not hesitate in declaring for an old-fashioned lynching.

There was at least one who believed implicitly in his innocence, and that one was Betty Gorman, the president's daughter.

She and Trillman were lovers—in fact, were engaged, and, as can be imagined, this was a hard blow for her. It staggered her, at first, but she was quick to rally, and made the vow that her lover's innocence should be proven.

Secretly, and at once, she sent for Deadwood Dick, Jr.

### CHAPTER III.

#### ARRIVAL OF A STRANGER.

The afternoon stage from the West rolled into Dollarville in its usual style, one day, a little later on.

Among the passengers to alight at the Eagle Hotel was one who would claim a second glance anywhere, a man of medium height, but of almost faultless figure.

He was dark, with black hair and mustache, and a pair of piercing, magnetic black eyes. Clad in a business suit of good material and excellent fit, he made a good appearance and was noticed.

There were other passengers, of course, but of them we will not speak.

This man entered the hotel at once.

"Room for one?" he asked of the landlord, immediately on entering.

"Always room for one here," was the cheery response. "First come first served, my motto."

"And that is not a bad one. I see I am the first of this crowd, so give me the best room you have got and nominate your figure."

The stranger was blunt and right to the point.

"All right, sir, will do that. Slap down your name here, please."

He shoved out the register, as he spoke, and handed a pen to the applicant at the same time.

The young man took the pen and quickly wrote:

RICHARD M. BRISTOL.

"There you have it," he said, putting down the pen. "I'll go right up and get rid of some of this travel stain, I guess."

"All right, sir, I will do that. Slap down all on the left, when you turn at the top."

"I'll find it."

And with that the young man left the room with as much confidence as if he had been there many a time before and knew every part of the house.

We call him a young man; his age was probably about thirty.

"That's what I call a purty good-lookin' blood," remarked the landlord, when his guest had gone from the bar-room.

"Ye are right whin ye say thot," agreed a jolly-looking Irishman, in rough miner's attire, who stood near. "He is a b'y afther me own heart, every toime!"

"And you don't often make a mistake in a face, Pat Conlon."

"Bedad! Ye are right whin ye say thot, too, Bob Gale. Oi w'u'd trust dhat feller wid me month's wages to dhe nixt town and back ag'in."

"What name does he give?" asked Joe Spraker, the district attorney, who was one of the group in the bar-room at the time. And he stepped forward to look and thus learn.

"Bristol, hey? If I am not mistaken, I have heard that name before."

"It's a name he naydn't be ashamed av, anyhow," averred the Celt.

"That's so, Pat."

That was all that was said at the time. Some others registered, and when the mail had been sorted at the post office the little excitement attending upon the arrival of the stage was at an end.

About an hour later the newcomer came down from his room, looking as fresh as a daisy after a shower.

Very few were in the bar-room at that time.

He spoke to the landlord.

"There is a family living here by name of Gorman, I believe," he said.

"Yes, Rube Gorman is president of the Dollarville Bank, sir," was the response he got.

"What kind of a man is he?"

"A solid man to tie to, every time."

"Much family?"

"Wife and two children."

"Must be the man I want to see, then. I am here to look into the value of a mine called the Hornet, and I heard that Gorman was posted."

"The Hornet?"

"Yes."

"I didn't know it was for sale."

"And I am afraid it isn't, either; that is what I want to see about."

"Oh! Then you want to buy?"

"No, I am only an agent. Where does this man Gorman live?"

"White cottage just on the slope the other side of the mine; anybody outside kin point it out to ye."

"I can find it. But, plenty of time; take something at my expense, and I'll chat with you while you are not busy."

"Well, I don't mind that; what's yours?"

"Oh, a cigar will do me."

Thus their good fellowship was in a manner cemented, and each leaned over



the bar from his own side and they became confidential.

"Can you give me any pointers regarding that mine?" the newcomer asked. "I will consider in confidence anything that you may have to say."

"Well, I will say fer one thing that I don't believe you kin buy et fer love or money."

"That remains to be seen. By the way, what shall I call you?"

"My name's Bob Gale."

"Well, Gale, if you can let me inside with information about that mine, I will see that you don't lose anything by it if our people succeed in scooping it in. I want to know how to open the matter, you see."

And so, for a few minutes, the stranger kept attention centered on that one subject, till it was uppermost in the landlord's mind.

He had an object.

The reader has recognized, of course, that it was Deadwood Dick, Jr.; in fact, he had registered his true name.

His real name, however, was so little known, as compared with his soubriquet of Deadwood Dick, that he could do that without much fear of discovery, unless some one happened to know him by sight.

"Has Gorman a personal interest in it?" he asked, presently.

"Well, as to that, I can't say."

"You spoke about his children—"

"Yes."

"How old?"

"Well, the gal is about nineteen, and the boy seventeen, should say."

"Oh! Then they are not really children, after all. Their mother is living, I think you said."

"Didn't mean to say that, if I did. Think I said Gorman had a wife—she is his second wife."

"Yes, I see; I guess you are right about that."

"Betty is a fine gal, Mr. Bristol."

"Plenty of lovers, then, no doubt, if that is the case."

"Yes, likely; in fact, every young buck in town is stuck on her, bad; but, she is 'gaged.'"

"Then she has made her selection, eh?"

"Yes. But, poor gal, her love affairs ain't runnin' smooth by any means."

"How is that?"

"Her lover is in the lock-up."

"The mischief! This gets interesting, Mr. Gale."

"Haven't heard?"

"No."

"Why, it's known all over—leastways I thought it was. Would you like to hear about it?"

"Certainly."

Thereupon was repeated the story of the murder, and the convicting of James Trillman.

"It certainly looks dark for him," the stranger commented.

"But, he didn't do it, no more'n you did he didn't do it, stranger; he is as innocent as I am myself."

"And what are they doing to prove him so, then?"

"What kin they do? Everything is against him. And that gal is just worryin' her life out."

"What has she done?"

"Nothin' but cry, I opine. Too blamed bad, too."

"Of course it is too bad, if he is innocent; but, as I said, it looks bad for him."

About that time others came in and the proprietor of the Eagle was made busy, and so Dick went out and sauntered leisurely up the gulch to take a look around.

He thought it would be as well to defer his visit to Miss Gorman till after

dark, for it was just possible that some one would see him, and might watch him with too much interest afterward.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### MORE MYSTERY HERE.

Dick kept his business to himself.

That is to say, his real business; he talked more or less about the Hornet Mine.

After supper at the Eagle, he strolled up the gulch again, and this time approached the Gorman cottage and knocked.

A servant opened the door.

"Is Miss Gorman at home?" Dick asked.

"She is not," was the answer.

"Will she be in soon?"

"We expect her every minute, sir. The fact is, no one knows where she is."

"Ha! How long has she been absent?"

"Since some time after the arrival of the mail this afternoon. Mr. Gorman has gone out now to have a search begun."

"Is he alarmed?"

"Well, it is something he cannot understand, nor any of us. She never stayed away from supper before, sir."

"But you do not think anything has happened?"

"My own opinion, sir, is that she is at the jail—"

"The jail?"

"Perhaps you have not heard—"

"That her lover is there—yes, I have heard that."

"If she is not found there, then I shall feel alarmed, too."

"Her father has gone there?"

"Yes."

"And Mrs. Gorman?"

"She has gone out, too, and so has Charlie—that is, Mr. Gorman's son."

"You think some of them will come soon?"

"Yes; they will come back to see if Miss Betty has returned yet, I can well imagine."

The girl was bright and intelligent.

"Well, I will wait. May I come in?"

"Certainly, sir; walk in."

The girl stepped back for him to enter, and he was shown into a neat room on the right of the hall.

There the servant left him, and he had time to look around and think a little before he was disturbed. He had little apprehension that there was anything serious in the absence.

On the walls and the mantel were some pictures.

Dick rightly guessed who some of them were. He said to himself: "This is Mr. Gorman, this is his son, and this the daughter."

When he had waited something like twenty minutes, and no one came, he began to think he had better return to the hotel and take chances of meeting Mr. Gorman, but just then the door opened.

The bank president entered the room, and Dick recognized him by the picture he had guessed to be his.

He rose at once.

"Mr. Gorman?" he asked.

"Yes. Who are you?"

Dick gave his professional card.

"The deuce! You are just the man we want here."

"Have you found your daughter?"

"No; and you must engage in the search with us at once."

"I suppose you were expecting me?"

"Why, no; why should I expect you?"

"Well, let's hold on a little; maybe I am pushing ahead too fast."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"Are you really alarmed concerning your daughter, sir?"

"Alarmed! Well, I should say so! She has never been out like this without our knowing where she was."

"You have been to the jail?"

"Yes; and she has not been there."

"And—"

"And I have called at every other likely place I could think of, but no one has seen her."

"It does look serious, truly. Was she in the habit of taking walks out of the town?"

"She has not been out since Trillman was arrested. You have heard about all that?"

"Yes. Had she an enemy? Or have you such?"

"Not that I know of."

"You were not aware, then, that she had written to me?"

"No, sir; I was not aware of that."

"Well, it is true. I came here to see her, at her urgent request."

"The deuce you did!"

"What reason had she in keeping you in ignorance of that fact, Mr. Gorman?"

"None whatever. I am both astonished and puzzled."

"How came she to know of me?"

"I know not."

"Well, it does begin to smack of mystery, sure enough. I expected to see her, of course, but under these circumstances I think it proper to reveal the situation to you."

"It is quite right. But, what can we do toward finding her?"

"What have you done?"

"I have alarmed the town, and everybody is out searching."

"Then there is nothing more that can be done, I should say, unless you can think of something that will give us a clew."

"I cannot."

"Had the bank cashier a rival?"

"No, sir."

"But your daughter had many admirers?"

"Oh, yes; but that was nothing; they were out of the race, and knew it."

"You do not know of any one who took it greatly to heart?"

"No. And, in any event, Trillman is now safely removed for the present, and with a fair prospect that he may suffer for the crime."

"You think him innocent?"

"Why, I know he is innocent! As innocent as you are."

"You know it?"

"Well, I would stake my life on it."

"That is pretty good faith in him, then. But, is it not possible that your daughter had an appointment with some one?"

"She would not do that without her mother's knowledge."

"I have heard that her mother is dead."

"Well, I mean her step-mother, of course. She is quite fond of her."

"When was she last seen?"

"She was seen to go out the back way, about an hour after the arrival of the stage as near as I can fix it."

"Who saw her?"

"The servants. They thought nothing of it; she had nothing on her head and no wrap."

"Would hardly need them such weather."

"True; but it indicated that she did not think of going far, I take it."

"You can't tell anything about it, sir. When you try to reason out a woman's acts, you deal with an unknown quantity."

"Well, well, we are gaining nothing this way. We must do something."

"And, as I said, you have done about all that can be done. If she is not found within an hour, then I would say offer a reward, and so stimulate the search."

"And must everything lag on our part?"

"Not if you can put anything in the way of a clew into my hands."



"And I fear that I cannot do that."  
 "Have you been to her room?"  
 "My wife has."  
 "And found nothing to explain the girl's absence?"

"I do not suppose she thought to look for anything. She merely went to see if Betty was there. Come, we will go up there; maybe you can find something."

Mr. Gorman led the way, Dick following.

#### CHAPTER V.

##### PICKING OUT A CLEW.

Just as they started up the stairs the front door opened.

A woman and a youth entered the hall, and Dick recognized them as he had recognized Mr. Gorman.

"Has she returned, Reuben?" the woman hastened to ask.

"No, she has not."

"And who is this?"

"Mr. Bristol, let me introduce you to my wife. Mrs. Gorman, this is Mr. Bristol, a professional detective, whom I am about to send out to find my child."

"God grant that you may find her, sir!" spoke the woman, fervently.

"I am taking him up to Betty's room," added the bank president. "You had better come with us."

"What is the object?"

"Being a professional, he may learn something that would escape our notice."

"True, true. Let us make all haste."

She ran after them up the stairs, and the youth came with her.

The woman was younger than Gorman by some years, and had keen eyes and reddish hair.

She was tall and slender, and Dick thought there was a resemblance between her and some person he had seen not a great while before, but he could not think who it was.

They were soon in the room.

It was a neat and pretty apartment. It showed everywhere the refined taste and habits of its occupant.

Dick took a rapid survey.

"Your daughter does some writing?" he asked.

There was a desk by a window, and a paper basket under it.

"Yes, she likes to dabble in verse," answered the father. "She has had some verses printed."

"With your permission, I will glance at things about her desk here. I may find a scrap of writing."

"Everything is open to you, sir," said the woman, quickly. "Do whatever you can that promises to explain the mystery."

Dick went forward to the desk.

On top was a blotter pad, with many marks of blotted writing upon it.

This he took up, and, stepping to a looking glass, he held it so that he could see plainly its reflection.

He saw quite a little about brooks, and birds, flowers, hills, rills, etc., and even caught his own name, Bristol; but nothing of importance was discovered. The blotter was too much used.

Laying that down, he pulled out the waste-paper basket.

Picking up what lay on top, he opened the crumpled bits one by one, but he found nothing to claim his notice.

While thus engaged, a little scrap about an inch square dropped to the floor, and he picked it up to put it again in the basket with the rest, when half of a word on it claimed his attention.

The word was this:

"Bris—"

Mentally, he immediately finished it—Bristol.

The paper had a slight yellowish tint, and was easy to distinguish from the rest in the basket.

Carrying the basket nearer to the light—the house was lighted by electricity, the power furnished at the mines—he began searching for more of the scraps. And he found many.

The others looked at him in profound silence.

It was evidently a revelation to them; they had never seen a detective at work before.

For the youth, it seemed particularly fascinating. He gazed with eyes at their widest. He had read many a detective tale, but this had not occurred to him in the emergency.

Finally Dick had secured all the pieces, or all he could find without dumping the basket.

Returning to the desk, he turned on the light of a bulb just over the desk and spread out his scraps. Then he began matching them, piece by piece—a slow and tedious task.

Gradually the matter began to make sense, and even before he had done he understood that his name had been forged.

When finally patched, the torn-up missive read thus:

"Miss Gorman—I have arrived, but think I had better not come direct to the house. Meet me at once at the top of the gulch near the old mine holes, and I will hear the case there. Then I can enter the town a stranger, and will have no need to call on you, and thus draw notice, perhaps. Do not disappoint me; I am there in waiting now. Respectfully,  
 "R. M. BRISTOL."

"Do you want to read it?" asked Dick, as he stepped away from the desk.

"Yes, yes," was the eager response on the part of Mrs. Gorman, and she was quick to take advantage of his offer.

Mr. Gorman looked over her shoulder and the son looked on from one side, and so all three read it at once, and as soon as they had done, all looked at Dick. They were amazed.

"You see?" asked Dick.

"The note was not from you, then?" asked the man.

"Certainly not, Mr. Gorman. Some one has forged my name, you see."

"And with what object?"

"That remains to be seen."

"Who can have done it?" questioned the woman.

"If I knew, madam, there would be an interview between me and him in the very near future," answered Dick, grimly.

"But the mine-holes!" exclaimed the bank president. "The most dangerous part of this whole gulch! Perhaps my child has been killed and thrown into them! Good Heavens! I shall go mad!"

"Do not borrow trouble, sir. Can you think what object any one could have in killing her?"

"No, no; but—"

"Then expect to find her alive. I have now a clew, and I intend to make use of it."

"And what shall we do?" asked Mrs. Gorman. "Reuben, you must send men there immediately to search—"

"Do nothing of the kind," answered Dick. "I must go there myself, and alone."

"But you are not acquainted with the ground, sir."

"Would you like to accompany me?"

"Yes, yes. We will go together."

"But, Mr. Bristol—"

"What is it, madam?"

"Who can have used your name? And why would our child go out to meet you, a stranger?"

She had not heard the particulars.

Dick briefly stated the points, to give her an understanding.

"Strange, strange," she mused. "And

who, besides, knew of your coming, and made such terrible use of the information?"

"I cannot guess, madam."

"And why was it done?"

"Impossible to say, yet. Mystery is piled on mystery, it seems."

"Yes, yes; that is only too true. But, no matter what else is left undone, restore our Betty to our arms alive and well!"

"That I will certainly try to do."

"You have now a double motive, sir."

"How is that?"

"Why, to aid us, and to learn who has thus used your name."

"You are right. I must have a foe here, or a friend who is altogether too friendly."

Dick wet a sheet of paper and laid it carefully down upon the scraps as he had arranged them. That done, he took another sheet and put mucilage on it.

Turning over the first sheet, the scraps were turned with it, and the back of the message was presented. Then he applied the sticky sheet of paper, and, pressing it down evenly, he had the note in order so that it could be preserved and read at any time.

Removing the first sheet then, he folded the other and put it in his pocket, and announced that he was ready.

They passed down the stairs, and Mr. Gorman led the way from the house by the rear exit, which was the nearest to their desired destination. They had a lantern with them, but not yet lighted.

#### CHAPTER VI.

##### DOUBLE DEALING.

As soon as these had gone, Mrs. Gorman said to her step-son:

"Come; you and I cannot be idle, Charlie. There are still some other houses to visit."

"But, what is the use?" the youth objected. "If she went to the mine-holes, we might as well wait, now, till father comes back, hadn't we?"

"No, no; I cannot remain idle, and you must not. You run to Smith's and Osmond's, and I will go to Howard's and the rest of the houses in that direction. That will finish it."

"Well, if you say so—"

"I do; I urge it! Hasten!"

They went forth from the house together, by the front way, but separated immediately and went in different directions.

The woman did not go to the place she had indicated at all.

Instead, she went around by the rear of the town to the north, and came up from the opposite direction, now with a shawl over her head so that her face could not be seen, only her eyes.

She peered in at the post office, and then at the mayor's office, which was the official headquarters of Dollarville.

She saw there the man for whom she was looking.

By a signal she drew his attention.

It was Joseph Spraker.

She moved slowly away, and presently he came out and overtook her.

"You?" he asked.

"Yes; I must speak to you."

"What is it?"

"He has discovered."

"Who—what?"

"That detective. He is sharper than Satan."

"You don't mean to tell me that he has found—"

"No, no; but he has now got a clew."

"And what is it?"

"The decoy note."

"The deuce!"

"You know I was to look out for it, if



left in her room, and it was; she put it in one of the drawers of her desk."

"And you knew that, and yet did not destroy it?"

"On the contrary, I did destroy it."

"And still you tell me that he has found it. You talk in riddles."

"I tore it up into bits not bigger than your thumb nail, some of them, and threw them into the waste basket."

"And he has pieced them together?"

"Yes."

"You might have known it."

"Might have known it? Why should I?"

"I told you who he was—the keenest detective in the world, almost."

"But, who would have thought of his looking there, when there was nothing to draw his attention?"

"Deadwood Dick would have thought of it—and he did, it seems. You should have sent it up in smoke; no other plan is safe when a paper is to be disposed of."

"Well, I will know better another time."

"Yes, but the mischief has been done this time. Where is he now?"

"He and Reuben have gone to the mine-holes."

"Confound it! They may discover the trail!"

"It is night."

"Night and day are one to Deadwood Dick. How long have they been gone?"

"Not ten minutes."

"Then perhaps they can be thrown off the track, even yet. If they have not already struck the trail, I will take care that there is none left for them to see when it comes daylight."

"What can you do?"

"The tramping of another horse around there will confuse things so that they could never get it straightened out."

"Well, I will leave you and hasten home again."

"Yes, do; and play well your role."

"Trust me for that."

They parted, the woman hastening in the direction of the banker's cottage, while the rascally district attorney bent his steps in the direction of one of the low saloons of the place.

When the woman reached home she found her step-son there ahead of her.

"Did you find her, or hear anything of her?" she asked.

"No; did you?"

"No; and I shall go mad if she is not found. Heaven only knows what fate has been hers, poor child!"

"And have we done all that we can do?"

"Yes, yes; we must now depend entirely upon your father and this wonderful detective whom he has engaged."

"I hope they will find her. I am going to the mine-holes to help them—"

"No, no; I cannot allow that, Charlie—"

"But, why not? Father will not care, and maybe I can be of some use."

"No, no; you must not go. It is a dangerous place, and what if an accident were to happen to you?"

"But no accident will happen—"

"You must not go, Charlie; it is my wish. You know what your father has said about your respecting my wishes."

"Well, if you insist, of course—"

"I do, Charlie, I do! I beg of you not to leave me alone, for we must comfort each other in this hour of trouble!"

The woman had the affection of the brother and sister.

In fact, no one would have dreamed of such double dealing, on her part; no one would have believed her equal to it.

In the mean time, Deadwood Dick and the bank president had made their way to the mine-holes.

"This will be an opportunity for us to talk," said Dick, as they proceeded in that direction. "You say there was no suspicion against any one but Mr. Trillman?"

"No."

"And assume that the crime cannot be proven against him?"

"I hope that it cannot; but Spraker tells me he cannot avoid his unpleasant duty. Spraker, you know, is the prosecutor."

"Then he seems to think it will be proven?"

"That is the way it looks. He has urged me to put forth every effort for the defense."

"Then he has a friendly interest in the prisoner?"

"Well, as to that I cannot say, but he is a friend of my family, and has an interest in my daughter."

"And how is that?"

"Well, her grief has been intense, and no one could help having an interest who knew her."

"I see. I must see this man and have a talk with him. If I find out all about the prosecution, I may then be able to work up the defense, even if I do not succeed in finding the guilty person."

"But, would the prosecutor tell what his case is?"

"He will tell me, of course, if he has the friendly interest you seem to think he has."

"That is so. You must see him as soon as possible, after we have recovered my child. I have no doubt but that he will give you all the aid possible, secretly."

By this time they came to the mine-holes and Mr. Gorman stopped to light the lantern, cautioning Dick not to proceed till he could see where he was going, as it was a place full of dangers to any one who did not thoroughly understand the ground.

## CHAPTER VII.

### COWARDLY ATTACK.

As soon as the lantern had been lighted and adjusted, Dick could survey his surroundings.

He recognized that it was a dangerous spot indeed. It was where some shafts had been sunk at one time or another, and the timber coverings were beginning to rot away.

"A bad place to straggle into in the dark," he observed.

"Just as I told you."

"The wonder is that the town allows it to exist."

"It has been ordered filled; there is only a delay in getting at it."

"Probably it will be done after some one has lost his life here, that is generally the way."

"Well, now to begin our search. How would it do to call my child's name?"

"It will only draw attention to us. If she is here, alive, we shall hear from her, undoubtedly."

"Heaven grant that she is not dead!"

"Amen!"

With the lantern, Gorman lighted the way among the covered shafts, and Dick kept close watch of the ground.

Suddenly the bank president uttered an exclamation.

He sprang forward a step and picked up something from the ground, which Dick, coming behind, had not seen.

"What is it?" Dick asked.

"Look! Her pistol!"

"Ha! That is something! We can read the signs."

"What do you read?"

"That she had occasion to draw it, but was overcome before she could use it. She has been abducted, Mr. Gorman."

"Or killed."

"Not that, I think; no one had an object in that, so far as I am able to see."

"And what object in the other?"

"Possibly, to force a ransom from you."

"I hope it is no worse than that. I hope it is no worse."

"Let me take the lantern, please."

Dick took the lead then and scanned the ground with the air of the true trailer; but the ground was almost like rock—in fact, a good portion of it was rock, and it was hard to pick out any signs that could be taken as meaning anything, especially by lantern light.

And the farther they proceeded the worse it became.

"I am afraid it is of no use, by night," said Dick, "but the trail must be taken up the first thing in the morning, and pushed to the end."

"And you will do it?"

"I will aid. I want the very best plainsman that can be found in town."

"That will be Pat Conlon."

"Who is he?"

"Just what you have said. He is an Irishman, who is at present working around the mines, when it pleases him to work at all."

"I will scrape up his acquaintance when we go back."

"But, let us look further before we give up. Remember, my child is in peril, and every minute is agony for me."

"I am willing to keep it up all night, sir, but I am afraid so little would be gained that all would be lost, for by morning we would be played out, or nearly so."

"Let us go to the end of the old mine road, anyhow."

"All right; you know the ground and I do not; if you think there is anything to be found, lead on."

Gorman proceeded to do so, taking the lantern again.

"I shall try the other trail, as soon as possible to get a starter on it," observed Dick.

"What trail is that?"

"The clew I hold."

"And is not this the trail it indicated?"

"I mean, I will try to find the writer of the note and so follow it up."

"Ah! I see!"

"Let me find the writer of it, and I can promise you a clearing up of the mystery, I think."

"By the way, Bristol, did you connect the two cases, the robbery and this?"

"That is something I have been trying to decide, Mr. Gorman. So far, I can find no good reason for doing so, and yet I suspect that they have bearing upon each other."

"The same thought has come to me."

"Have you reason for thinking that way?"

"No, further than that both are blows at me."

"And have you an enemy?"

"I do not know it if I have."

"Well, it is what I declared it to be at first, Mr. Gorman—a mystery."

They were silent and thoughtful to the end of their present destination, and they discovered nothing more.

Where the hard ground and rock gave way to softer soil, nothing further was found to encourage them. No tracks, no sign of any kind; so they gave it up.

"It is no use, Mr. Gorman," said Dick. "Those who have been clever enough to learn that I was coming here have also been clever enough to decoy your child in my name and cover up their trail. I am afraid that it may prove difficult even by daylight. Can we return without going among the holes?"

"Yes; we will follow the trail around."

"We may as well put out the light."



This was done, and they proceeded slowly toward the town once more.

They were engaged in conversation, in low tones, Dick doing his best to get hold of a beginning point, when, of a sudden, they were attacked from the rear.

A blow on the head dropped Gorman to the ground, and before Dick could make a defense, three men were upon him.

"Surrender!" hissed one. "Surrender, or you die!"

"And die if I do, I suppose," retorted Dick, as he struggled fiercely.

"No, we will give you one chance."

"Well, it is not a question of surrender," said Dick, ceasing to struggle. "You are too many for me."

"You show good sense. If you utter a cry we will knife you and throw you into one of the mine-holes, to keep company with others who have gone where they can tell no tales."

"What are you going to propose?"

"Come with us and find out. Mind, your life is not worth the life of a fly to us, or certainly not any more."

Deadwood Dick was shrewd enough to see that there was but one chance for him, and that was to accept whatever terms might be offered. His life was at stake, and these men were desperate.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

##### STARTLED BY A QUESTION.

Dick Bristol was in a bad fix.

He had had experience enough to recognize the fact, too.

The men had spoken only the truth in declaring that his life was no more to them than the life of a fly.

They led him away from the scene of the attack, a man hanging on each arm, so that he was rendered helpless, the third man leading the way, and so they passed up the gulch.

When out of sight of the lights of the town, they turned into a narrow by-trail.

Along this they went for some distance; then they stopped in a sort of basin, where it was too dark for Dick to see more than the outlines of his captors.

"Now," said the spokesman, in deep tones, evidently to disguise his voice, as Dick readily guessed, while the others still held fast to their prisoner; "now we will state our terms."

"You have got it all your own way," said Dick.

"Just so; you have mighty little choice in the matter. Still, as we have nothing against you, we mean to give you one chance."

"I accept it."

"You are wise. The alternative is death here and a grave in the mine-holes. You have chosen wisely."

"State the terms."

"The condition is that you go away from Dollarville, drop the case at once—and never return."

"Well, I have got to do it. I am not a fool altogether; I know a good thing when I see it. That fellow Trillman is nothing to me, and I don't feel called on to give my life for him."

"Then you swear that you will go away?"

"I swear it. Give me the chance, and see how quick I will dust out."

"All right."

The man stepped forward, and Dick felt the cold tube of a gun pressed against his forehead.

"Let me give you fair warning," the man said. "We let you off easy this time, but if we catch you again it will go hard with you. We will kill you at once! Do you hear?"

"Yes; I hear, and heed."

"It is well. You will be bound and gagged and left here for the rest of the

night. To-morrow, about stage time, you will be set free, by a man who will come to you in disguise. This man will escort you down to the trail, keeping you under cover, and when the stage comes along you will stop it and get aboard."

"Exactly."

"You will be watched from that moment, and at the first indication that you mean to break your word and return here you will be killed. This is no idle threat; it will be carried out. Men, bind and gag him, while I hold this gun against this head."

Dick's hands were brought together behind his back, and were there securely tied. Then his feet were served in the same manner, and he was laid on the ground and a gag was put into his mouth, rendering him helpless, and more than ever at the mercy of his foes.

"Now, a last word with you," spoke the ringleader. "You have struck a snag that you never looked for here. The job you tackled was too heavy for even Deadwood Dick to handle. I guess you are ready to acknowledge it now. Anyhow, it is the fact."

Dick could not deny it, gagged.

"There is more of a mystery here at Dollarville than you ever dreamed of, and you have run up against men as smart as yourself. We knew of your coming; we have lain in wait for you; and now, as a last friendly warning, your life depends upon your obeying our orders to the letter. Return here, and you die!"

With that, the three walked away, and Dick heard their steps die away in the distance.

"Well, Richard," he thought, "you are in a double twist now, sure enough. You certainly have got more than you bargained for. This case is deeper than it looked to be at first sight. But perhaps there will be another inning, and you will come to the bat again after a while. We'll see."

Leaving him there, we return to the scene of the attack.

Reuben Gorman lay where he had fallen, and as still as if he had been killed by the blow.

After a time he began to recover consciousness, and when he opened his eyes it was some moments before he could gather his thoughts sufficiently to realize where he was.

His head felt sore, and, putting his hand to it, he found a lump where he had been struck.

"I wonder if I was left for dead?" he asked himself. "And what have they done with him? Heavens! Have they thrown him into the mine-holes?"

The thought lent him strength, and he got upon his feet.

As soon as able, he started in the direction of the village, and finally arrived at the door of his own house and staggered into the hall.

His wife and son heard him.

They were in the room on the right, and came out immediately to learn who it was and what word was brought.

"Reuben!" the woman cried, springing to her husband's aid. "What has happened to you? Where is the gentleman who was with you?"

"I—I don't know," was the trembling and excited answer. "We were set upon, and he is missing."

"Good Heavens! Maybe he has been killed."

"I fear it."

"Now, if you had only let me go, mother," complained Charlie.

"You might have shared the same fate, had I done so. I am more than ever glad that you did not go."

The wife and son helped the bank president into the room, where he dropped upon

a chair at once, and the woman began immediately to ascertain how badly he was injured.

"Never mind me," said Gorman. "Send for help at once."

"Yes, yes. Charlie, go for men to come and try to find that detective."

"Whom shall I bring, father?" the youth asked.

"Anybody—anybody! Bring Spraker, if you can find him, and hunt for Pat Conlon. Tell them to come in haste, while the trail is warm."

Charlie hastened out, and the wife cared tenderly for her husband's hurt, at the same time inquiring solicitously about the particulars of the attack, and whether the assailants were known.

"Could you not see them—not one of them?" she urged.

"I tell you I knew nothing about it till I came to."

"Too bad, too bad. If you could have seen only one of them, so as to recognize him again, it would insure their punishment."

"How do you know there was more than one?"

"How—how do I know?" the woman repeated, staggered for the instant by the question.

"Yes, how do you know? You seem to insist that there were several of them. I don't see what has made you think that, any more than that there was only one."

"Why, Reuben, I would not think for a moment that one man would attack both of you, and the less so if he knew that one was Deadwood Dick, who has such a reputation. It was only natural that I should say they in speaking of the persons who attacked you."

"Yes, yes; that's true, that's true!"

#### CHAPTER IX.

##### GOING IT ALONE.

In a brief time Charlie Gorman returned, a crowd with him, foremost among whom were Spraker and Pat Conlon.

Several of them passed in, and were speedily put in possession of the leading facts.

"The daring rascals!" cried Spraker. "The pity is that they were not discovered. So that man was Deadwood Dick, was he? Too bad that he had to go under that way."

"Bedad, Oi said he was a broth av a b'y, dhe minute Oi set me two eyes on him!" cried Conlon. "Oi knew it by dhe shape av dhe nose on his face, so Oi did. By Hivvins! if we foind him aloive, it is Pat Conlon will help him to run down dhe dirty bla'guards!"

"And I am with you," declared Spraker. The others voiced the same declaration eagerly.

That they had been honored by the presence of such a man as Deadwood Dick and had not known it, was a sensation.

"But you must go and find him," urged Gorman. "Not a minute is to be lost. I am better now, and can go with you to the place where the attack was made, and from there you must pick out the trail."

"No, no; you must not go, Reuben!" protested Mrs. Gorman.

"There is every reason why I must go, if they have to carry me," cried the banker.

"Yes, yes," urged Spraker, "he must go, and we will carry you, too, Mr. Gorman, if you feel too weak to walk. What do you say?"

"All I need is assistance," averred the banker. "Two of you aid me a little, so that no time will be lost. Get lanterns, torches, anything! That man must be found!"

"Ye are roight, he must!" cried Conlon. "Oi am wid yez, every toime, an' will be to the very ind!"



They were out and away as speedily as possible, two men supporting Gorman, and two or three others carrying lights, and in due time they reached the spot where Gorman had come to his senses.

"This is the place," he announced. "It was here I was struck down by that coward hand!"

"And here is where the work must begin!" cried Spraker.

"And, bedad, we'll begin it!"

Conlon was one who had a lantern, and he began scouting around at once in search of tracks.

But they were almost impossible to find, for, as if the place of attack had been purposely chosen with a view to leaving no trail, the ground was as hard as a floor.

And then the fussy attorney kept running in Pat's way, bound to be ahead of him if he could.

One or two others were doing the same.

"Begorra!" Pat suddenly cried, "if yous gossoons don't kape back, ye will be afther hearing av somethin' drap, Oi'm tellin' yez!"

"What do you mean?" demanded Spraker.

"Oi mane phwat Oi say, begob!"

"And you call me a gossoon?"

"Dhat same Oi did! Phwat do you know about a trail?"

"I am as eager as you, sir, and perhaps know as much, if it comes to a question of that!"

"Well, it is jest here: Ayther you drop behind, or Oi give up dhe job, dhat is all Pat Conlon has to say about it."

"This is no time for bickering," spoke up Gorman. "You know Pat is an old trailer, Spraker, so let him have the lead in this matter."

"Well, I will; but I won't stand any such names."

So the irate prosecutor fell back, and the Irishman went ahead and bent to his task.

He kept muttering to himself, however, and what he had to say was by no means complimentary to the district attorney.

The tracks were all confused; the few that were defined, as Deadwood Dick himself had found it, were impossible to follow by lantern-light. And there was another difficulty.

Charlie Gorman's report in the town, when he went for help, had been passed from lip to lip, and by this time men were running to the mine-holes from every direction, and it was impossible to keep them from going over the ground where the trail must be.

Finally, Conlon gave it up.

"Bedad!" he cried, "Oi give it up till mornin', and by dhat toime dhe ould divil himsel' will not be able to foind it!"

Meantime the cry was—"To the mine-holes!"

It was the belief that the detective had been murdered and his body cast into one of these old shafts.

All was excitement, and in less than half an hour torches were burning everywhere, and a thorough search was in progress—a search in the wrong place and to the wrong end.

But the citizens could not know that; their intention was good and they worked like beavers.

The name of the victim inspired them.

It were as if an angel had visited them unawares, this coming of Deadwood Dick under a false name.

His fame was well known, and not a man, woman or child, hardly, but would have missed a hot dinner to have got a look at him when alive—for it was the belief that he was certainly dead.

Gorman was taken back to the house, Spraker going with him and swearing as loud and strong as the dignity of his office would admit of.

Meantime Pat Conlon was lost sight of.

He had disappeared, and, while no one thought to look for him, yet no one would have found him, probably, had search been made.

Pat had turned down his lantern, drawn his coat around it, and proceeded alone further up into the gulch. Perhaps he had something in mind that he did not care to confide.

"Oi tho't he was a mon av more sinse, on me soul Oi did," he went on, complaining to himself. "Oi don't know phwat to make av him. Could it be dhat he had an object in shpoiling dhe trail fur me? Oi can't belave dhat av him, as little as Oi love dhe jackass."

And so he went on muttering, but arriving no nearer to a conclusion.

At last he came to ground which would reveal tracks, if it had been crossed at all, and there he stopped.

He listened well, and, hearing no one, removed his lantern from under his coat, turned up the light, and, taking off his hat, carried that in the same hand to prevent the light from being seen from the direction of the mine-holes.

"Begorra, Oi want to be alone, fur wanst," he told himself.

He examined well the ground.

Something he saw seemed to satisfy him, for he proceeded, step by step, along the trail.

"Four that wint and three that came back, hey?" he presently muttered. "Oi loike dhe looks av dhat moighty well, on me soul Oi do. It tells me a tale in me ear, so it does. Oi smell a rat, begorra!"

He got down close and examined each set of tracks with minute care, taking plenty of time to do it.

"Oi think Oi have thim well in moind, now," he said, finally. "Oi will remember thim, and Oi'll have an eye out fur tracks dhe morry, if Oi live. Oi only hope dhat Oi shall foind Deadwood Dick aloive and kicking."

He moved on, following the direction from which the three men had come on their return.

The tracks revealed that they were three of the party who had gone the other way only a little time before, and he guessed who the fourth had been, the one who had not come back.

Finally the tracks left him.

The trail came out on a space of bare rock, which continued for fifty yards or more, and on the other side, where the trail continued, the tracks were not to be seen. But Pat did not give up; he had expected that he should have hard work before he got done, and he was ready for it.

## CHAPTER X.

### DICK'S NEW PARD.

It was far into the night when Pat Conlon's work was done.

He made his way down into the basin where Deadwood Dick had been left bound and gagged.

There in the bottom was Dick, helpless, and almost chilled to the bone from lying on the cold, hard rock for so long a time, and at sight of him, Pat exclaimed: "Begorra, Oi have found ye at last!"

Dick had heard him coming, had seen the light, and had been filled with hope while he waited.

The Irishman put down his lantern and made haste to relieve Dick of his bonds, first of all taking the gag from his mouth so that he could use his tongue.

But at first Dick could not make a sound.

"Oi will fix ye, bedad!" his rescuer exclaimed, as soon as he had cut all the cords that bound him. "Here, let a drap av this trickle down yure t'roat, an' see av it won't stir up yure blood a bit fur ye!"

He had jerked a flask from his pocket, and, removing its cap, applied it to Dick's lips.

And, having done that, he set about rubbing Dick's limbs.

Under this process Dick soon began to revive, and after a few minutes was able to say something.

"You have saved my life," were his first words.

"Oi belave you are right, yer honor."

"And whom have I to thank for it?"

"Pat Conlon, begob; short and swate."

"Well, Pat, I am your friend for life, for this night's work."

"Ye had orter be, begorra."

"How did you find me?"

"By lookin' fur ye."

Dick smiled, or came as near to it as possible, considering how stiff and cold he was.

"Well, look for that flask again," he said, "and let me take another pull at it. I have got to warm up, somehow."

"Here it is, sor."

Dick made use of it, and, handing it back, bade the Irishman walk him up and down a little till he got limbered sufficiently to go it alone.

This was done, and after about ten minutes of the exercise Dick began to be something like himself once more.

"That was as bad a tying up as I ever got," he declared. "I thought I would die, and I certainly would had you not come. They bound me so tight that the cords almost cut my flesh. There was certainly no escape."

"Do ye know who dhey wur, sor?"

"I do not."

"But we will, begob."

"As true as my name is Bristol."

"And Oi am wid ye as long as Oi wear boots," asseverated Pat.

Dick held out his hand to him, and received a warm and hearty pressure.

"Oi said to mesel' dhat you was a broth av a b'y whin Oi first sot eyes on ye," Pat declared, "and whin Oi heard ye was Deadwood Dick, begorra, me heart l'aped wid deloight!"

"Then you had heard of me?"

"Heard av ye? Begorra, dhat mon w'u'd be a wonder dhat hadn't!"

"And are you inclined to aid me in this work?"

"Haven't Oi towld ye so?"

"But, there is a risk to run."

"To dhe divil wid dhe risk!"

"You are just the kind of a pard I want, then. I know your worth, by the fact of your finding me here as you did."

"Dhat was nothing, sor."

"It was everything to me. How did you do it, anyhow?"

"Well, a big part av dhe way on me hands and knees, Oi admit to ye; but Oi was determined, ye see."

"Thank God you were!"

"And phat now, sor?"

"We will get out of here, first of all, for my captors have promised me another visit soon."

"Dhe sooner dhe better, dhen. Come along wid me."

Pat led the way out of the basin on the opposite side, and they went off into the dark rocks and woods that lay beyond.

Little was said until they came to a place where Dick proposed sitting down to arrange their plans of action, since it was useless—worse than useless—to walk around aimlessly.

"You are the man Mr. Gorman recommended to me," Dick then remarked. "I intended scraping acquaintance with you, anyhow, Pat."

"It was mesel' dhat done dhe scrapin' it seems, sor."

"Yes. I intended to get you to aid me in tracking the rascals who have carried off the banker's daughter."



"Oi will bet dhat it's dhe same skunks."  
 "Not a doubt of it, in my mind."  
 "And we'll make dhem sick, you bet!"  
 "I think we will, if they give us a chance!"

"Phwat is yure plan?"  
 "You have a cousin, Pat."  
 "Who said Oi have?"  
 "I say you have."  
 "Well, ye are mistaken, dhat's all."  
 "Maybe it is a brother, then?"  
 "Divil a wan!"  
 "Then it is a cousin. That will be better, anyhow."

"But, Oi say—"  
 "Let me do the saying, Pat. You have heard that he is coming to see you, and you will let it be known that you are expecting him. See?"

"Oi guess Oi begin to see, sor."  
 "I'll make you see, if you don't. You will watch the stage daily, but it is more than likely that he will reach Dollarville to-morrow—which means to-day, seeing that the night is so far spent."

"Yis, yis."  
 "You will introduce him, and make a jolly time over him."

"Dhat same Oi will."  
 "Then you understand it?"  
 "Oi do, begob."

"That is enough for me to explain of it, then. You and your cousin can have ample opportunity to talk after he arrives. Meantime, you will do all in your power to strike the trail and find where the banker's daughter has been taken to."

"Oi will dhat same."  
 "And use your judgment. Have you seen anything that has made you suspicious of any one?"

"Oi have dhat same."  
 "Who was it?"  
 "Dhat gossoon av a Spraker."  
 "What have you noticed?"

Pat thereupon told of the incident in connection with the beginning of the search for him—Dick.

"You may be on the right track," admitted Dick. "Have an eye out for him on the sly, and as soon as your cousin reaches town you will be able to make it hot for any one concerned."

And so they continued until their plans were perfected.

Dick felt certain that in this fellow he had found a jewel, as the Irishmen themselves say.

They finally rose from where they had been sitting, and Pat conducted his friend out to the trail some distance from the place where his captors had brought him in, and there they parted.

"Begorra, but he is a mon to tie to," Pat decided, as he bent his own steps in the direction of Dollarville. "Oi will give him all dhe help dhere is in me, and av we don't make somebody sick and sorry, it will be owin' to me lack of grit, dhat is all!"

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE SEARCH IN VAIN.

Pat Conlon had his thinking machine in working order as he walked along.

Suddenly he came to a stop and scratched his head with a vigor that indicated that he had a nut to crack.

"Begorra, dhat is so!" he exclaimed. "But will it be best to do it or not, Oi wonder! Oi must make no mistake in phwat Oi do, or Oi may shpoil dhe whole game fur us."

The thought that had come to him was this: By remaining near the rock basin he could see who would come to free Dick and conduct him down to the trail, and by following him might discover the identity of at least one of the rascals against whom they were contending.

He thought hard for several minutes.

"It won't do," he finally decided, resum-

ing his way to Dollarville. "No, it won't do at all at all. It would be takin' dhe risk av bein' discovered mesel', and dhat would upset dhe plans av me cousin dhat is to come; besides, it moight fit me out fur plantin', dhe which same Oi am in no haste to experience, begob! Oi must be found in me cabin in dhe morning."

By the time he entered Dollarville, the town had become quiet.

The search at the mine-holes had ended, no one was seen on the streets, and few lights were to be seen anywhere.

At an early hour there was a knock at Pat's door.

"Who is dhere?"

"It is Spraker."

"And phwat do ye be wantin'?"

"I want to see you. Open the door."

"All right; just wait a minute."

Pat got on his clothes with no loss of time, and opened the door.

There was the little weasel-faced attorney, and he looked at the Irishman in a searching manner, which Pat noticed.

"Good morning!" he greeted. "You are wanted, Pat, just as soon as you can get something to eat and get ready."

"And who wants me?"

"Mr. Gorman."

"And phwat fur?"

"To take up the trail to find his daughter, if a trail can be found."

"Yis, if a trail can be found!" Pat echoed. "Afther all dhe jackasses dhat was out last noight, divil a chance fur it!"

"Well, the men were excited last night, Pat, and no wonder."

"And you were wan of them."

"I have to admit it, Pat, and I feel that I must offer an apology to you for it."

"Divil a made av dhat; ye didn't know any better, and so Oi excuse ye. Are you to be wan av dhe searching party dhe day?"

"Yes, I suppose—"

"Dhen Oi am out av it. Oi want no more av dhe same wid you—"

"But that will not happen again, Pat, and I have offered my apology. You must not refuse, Pat."

"And will you agree to take a back seat?"

"Yes, I will agree to that."

"Well, dhen, fur dhe sake av dhe gurrel, Oi will do phwat Oi can, and ye may tell Mr. Gorman so. Oi could not refuse him, anyhow."

"All right. But hurry, for we must be off at once."

"Oi will be dhere in a jiffy."

Spraker turned away, but the next instant Pat called him back again.

"Oi say, Spraker?"

"Well?" Stopping.

"Oi have something to show ye. It won't take two seconds."

"What is it?"

"Come around here and see fur yersel'."

Pat stepped out and led the way around his shanty, entering a small inclosed yard in the rear.

Spraker followed impatiently, perhaps wondering what he was going to see.

In that rear yard was a dog-house, and Pat advanced to that.

"Oi have some av dhe foineest pups here dhat you ever saw in yure loife," he declared. "If you would loike to buy one av dhem, whin dhey are a little older, Oi will let ye have yure pick av dhe lot."

But Spraker had stopped in disgust.

"To the devil with you and your pups!" he cried. "At a time like this, to think of such things. I doubt whether Gorman will appreciate your service so much if I tell him this."

"Begorra, it has taken but wan minute."

"And that is one minute lost. We'll talk dogs some other time."

"All right, all right; just as ye plaze; no offinse intended ye, sor, none at all."

Spraker hastened away, as if his dignity had been lowered, and Pat looked after him with a grin as he closed and made fast the gate.

Pat had chickens in his yard, and the fence was of tight boards.

As soon as he had fastened the gate he dropped down to the ground within, and began examining Spraker's tracks.

"Begorra, he never tumbled wanst!" he exclaimed. "Oi did dhat as nate as wax, so I did, and, be Hivvins, av dhis isn't wan av dhem same thracks Oi will ate me shirt!"

He examined it well, and when he rose and entered his shanty, he was satisfied he would have at least one pointer for his "cousin" when he came.

Making his breakfast as speedily as possible, he soon put in his appearance at Gorman's cottage.

There Gorman himself, Spraker, and a score or so more, were awaiting his coming, all ready to set forth upon the trail, most of them mounted.

They had a horse for Pat, too.

"Now, Pat, if you ever did good work, you must do it to-day," said Gorman, on Pat's coming up. "My child must be found, and you are the only man to find her for me. I put you in command."

"Thank ye, sor," Pat acknowledged. "Are you a-going wid us?"

"I am, of course!"

"Dhen Oi make you second in command, sor. And, by dhe same token—"

"What?"

"Did yez foind dhat young feller last noight?"

Pat was taking in Spraker from the corner of his eye while he put this question.

"We did not, Pat," answered Gorman. "I fear it is only too plain that he has been murdered. God grant this mystery may soon be cleared, and the evil ones brought to justice."

"Amen! to dhat same, sor."

Spraker watched Pat closely, as the Irishman was aware, but the Celt gave no open attention to him, yet had an eye upon him as much as possible without the risk of detection.

The little company started, and as they left the house, Mrs. Gorman called after them:

"Pat Conlon, bring my child back to me, and I will never forget the service while I live."

"Dhat same Oi shall thry to do."

They proceeded to the mine-holes direct, but it was useless to think of finding anything there.

Where hundreds of tracks had been made in every direction, wherever it was possible for a foot to leave its imprint, nothing could be hoped for.

There was but one chance, and even that was a doubtful one. It was to widen the circle until the limit of this confusion of tracks was passed, and there take the chances of striking another trail.

But it proved futile, utterly. Tracks were found and followed, but they invariably turned and came back to town again.

Conlon, of course, understood how it was, but he did not let it appear that he did. He knew that the trail had been hidden, and a hundred false ones made so that to find the true one was next to impossible.

At noon the search was given up.

## CHAPTER XII.

### CONLON'S COUSIN COMES.

When they rode back into the town, Mrs. Gorman met her husband at the door.

She seemed to know the result by their faces, and the fact that the missing girl was not with them.



She covered her face, and sobs shook her form.

"She is lost! lost!" she cried.

"We have still one hope."

"And what is that, Reuben?"

"That she is alive."

"Maybe it were better that she were dead."

"No, no. I will not say that. Perhaps she has been taken to force a ransom out of me, and if that is the case, I will gladly pay it."

"I should say, offer a reward," suggested Spraker.

"I have done that."

"Double it—treble it. Money must not count for anything. But, pardon me; I carry my interest too far."

"I will give every dollar I am worth for the restoration of my child," the banker avowed. "But, at the same time, the murderer of poor Watkins shall not escape his just deserts."

"No fear that he will, if it was Trillman."

"Spraker, I insist that he did not do that deed. Why will you oppose me in it as you do?"

"Because I have no proof against any one else."

"But he had no need to rob the bank, no need to stain his hands with blood, no need to dip into crime."

"How do you know that?"

"He was honest, happy, content with his salary and little savings, and happy in his engagement with my daughter, of which I approved. If you can show me a good reason otherwise—"

"I confess that I cannot, sir; but, every man has his own private troubles, and you cannot know but that Trillman had his."

"And do you know that he had?"

"I fear you misunderstand me, Mr. Gorman. I am not eager to convict the man at all; nothing would please me so well as to see him freed and clear of the charge; but, in my office, I must take things as I find them."

"Well, it is useless to discuss it. There are more important things than that to occupy our thoughts at the present moment. I am going to send for government detectives. I will report what has happened to Deadwood Dick, and they will send their best men in all haste."

"The very thing to do, Mr. Gorman; strange that I did not think of it. If these rascals can be run down at all, they are the men to do it. But it will take days for them to get here."

"That is true, and not another day must be lost in sending for them."

"Not another hour, Mr. Gorman! I would say, send a special messenger to the nearest telegraph point immediately."

"It shall be done. Pat, will you go?"

"Nothing would suit me better, Mr. Gorman; but the fact av the matter is—"

"I cannot take excuse, Pat. You must go—"

"Yis, but Oi can't, Mr. Gorman. Oi expect a cousin av mine by dhe stage any day, and Oi must be here to meet him whin he arrives."

"He can take care of himself till you return."

"Oi would go in a minute, sor, but any man here can do as well as Oi, and so Oi would ask to be let off. Send wan av dhe darkey b'ys; dhey are young and light, and it will be fun fur dhem."

Gorman had some young negroes in his employ about the cottage and stables, and they were excellent riders, and Gorman had swift horses.

"Well, I will do that," he said. "I know you would go, Pat, if there was no one else."

"Oi'd break me neck to do it, sor."

So it was arranged, and one of the darkies was despatched upon the mission.

The town, meantime and after, was in a state of suppressed excitement.

There was an air of mystery overhanging the young city, and no one seemed to feel perfectly free to do or say anything.

There had been the robbery of the bank, the murder of the watchman, the abducting of Betty Gorman, and, last, but not least, the murder of Deadwood Dick, the prince of detectives!

It needed but a spark to explode the passion of the people, and it would fare hard with the guilty wretches if caught.

But would they be caught?

The afternoon stage rolled into town at about the usual hour, and with its usual complement of passengers.

Pat Conlon was on hand to meet it, as on the day before, and he had let it be known around that he looked for a cousin who was coming out to try his luck at Dollarville.

There were quite a few passengers on top, and as the stage came to a stop there was a sudden breaking out on the part of one of them.

"Pat! Pat!" he cried, waving his hat. "Oi do be lookin' on ye wanst more, Hivin bless ye!"

"Ach! it is you, Tim!" cried Pat, with an accent of gladness.

"Dhat same it is, Pat."

"Well, get down here and I've me shake hands wid ye, ye jolly gossoon, ye! Oi am dhat glad at soight av ye, dhat Oi could waive without sorry, so Oi could."

On the top of the stage was a typical Irishman, with stick and bundle, having the flavor of the "ould dart" upon every crook and corner of him. His brogue could be imagined before it was heard.

"And is dhis dhe place ye do be callin' Dollarville?" he demanded.

"It is dhe same, Tim."

"An' ye had called it Quarter-av-a-dollarville, it was nearer to dhe truth ye would have come, Oi am thinkin'."

"Begob, it may be dhat ye will be willin' to be callin' it Foive-dollarville before ye git done wid it!" cried Pat. "Ye may get good pay fur yure wurruk, but by dhe same token dhere is good wurruk goin' on fur yure pay, allanna!"

The cousin by this time had got down, and the two rushed into each other's arms and embraced.

"What are you goin' to do with him, Pat?" asked one bystander. "He is too green to burn."

"Dhen Oi'll kape him till he is ripe," answered Pat. "Oi'll buy me a quart, and begorra Oi'll trate him well, be sure av dhat!"

"Has he got his life insured?"

"No; but his stomach is, or Oi'd never risk Dollarville bug-juice in it, Oi assure ye. But, b'ys, wan and all, let me introduce me cousin, Timmy Doyle, late over from Limerick."

The introduction elicited a cheer from some of the crowd, and Pat conducted his cousin off in the direction of his shanty.

On the way they laughed and gesticulated, much as two happy schoolboys might have done, but as soon as the door closed upon them they dropped all that play and became serious.

"Bedad, but ye did dhat nate," Pat complimented.

"You think so?" queried Dick.

"Divil a wan could have done it nater."

"Well, I tried to pass in the character."

"And ye have, begob!"

"What is the situation now?"

Thereupon Pat went over the whole ground, since his parting with Dick, and gave him every point that he had been able to pick up.

"The infernal scoundrel!" Dick exclaimed, under his breath. "He is a deep

one, Pat, but we will bring him up with a short jerk, the first thing he knows. This does not make the mystery any more clear."

"Not wan whit more clear, begorra."

"And there is work to be done."

"A hape av wurruk, yer honor!"

"Well, the first thing is to make good our deception. You go and buy a quart of jig-water, and we'll go upon one of the rip-stavingest old tears, in make-believe, that you ever heard of in your life!"

"Dhat same we will, begob. Whoop! fur dhe devil's own spree!"

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### CHARLIE GORMAN'S COMMISSION.

Meantime, Reuben Gorman had posted a reward of five thousand dollars for the rescue and return of his abducted daughter.

Notices to this effect were in the leading business places of the town, and were drawing not a little attention; but, while many a man would have liked to earn the reward, it looked impossible.

Betty Gorman was missing as completely as if she had been taken up into the sky.

There was one who said but little, but thought much—her brother Charlie.

Young in years, he had still seen experience in and about Dollarville and elsewhere that had given him some knowledge of the world.

After what he had seen of Deadwood Dick's work in this case he desired to do something himself.

And it was needful that some one should do something, now that the great detective had been removed.

No one would be likely to suspect him, he thought.

He had no one to confide in, however, for he well knew that his father and step-mother would oppose his plans if he mentioned the matter to them.

As for Spraker, he had taken a dislike to him, since he had made everything appear so black against Trillman, and could not bring himself to make a confidant of him, although he knew that his father and step-mother did. Trillman and he had always been good friends, and Charlie thought a good deal of him.

Come to think of it, he was the very person for him to confide in, for his whole interests were identical with the finding of Betty and the arresting of the rascals.

So he went to the jail, for Dollarville had a jail—the genuine article.

It was of brick, with iron and steel furnishings throughout, and divided into cells.

Trillman had a cell somewhat apart from the rest of the inmates, who were men of the very worst type of border ruffians for the most part.

Charlie was admitted for the asking.

"Thank Heaven, Charlie, there is one who has not forgotten that I am here," the prisoner cried, at sight of the youth.

"No, I haven't forgotten you, Mr. Trillman," was the response, as the two shook hands; "but everything has been in such a boil that I couldn't think of anything but Betty."

"What of Betty?" eagerly.

"She has been stolen."

"Stolen! My God! Tell me all about it, Charlie!"

And so the youth did, relating all that he knew, and as he knew it.

"Why did they not let me know before?" Trillman asked. "Why did they keep it from me?"

"I don't suppose anybody thought of you in the excitement; and then it was of no use anyhow, for you would only worry and could do no good. I am sorry now that I told you."

"And what are they doing toward finding her?"



"Father has sent a messenger to telegraph for government detectives, and has put up a big reward."

"Would that I were free to join in the search! Heavens! this news is maddening! I cannot endure this confinement longer, knowing that she I love is in the hands of—Heaven only knows whom!"

"I came here to have a talk with you about it, Mr. Trillman."

"What good can a talk do? Somebody must act."

"And I want to be the one to do that. The fact is, I can't be idle; I must play detective, and see if I can't be of some use."

"And you came to me."

"I want you to tell me what to do. There is no one else I could go to, unless to Spraker, and—"

"Curse Spraker!"

"Then you don't like him, either?"

"Like him! In Heaven's name, why should I like him?"

"There is no reason why you should, of course, and that is the reason I am down on him, because he has pushed you so hard."

"He might be excused for that, Charlie, but I have had ample time to think over the whole matter, now, and I more than half believe that he has had a hand in my misfortune."

"You don't mean it!"

"I do."

"Have you any proof against him?"

"Yes; I have and I haven't. One thing, I have reason to believe that he is in love with your sister."

"Ha! ha! Betty wouldn't wipe her feet on him!"

"I know that, and so does he; and that may be the secret of the whole matter; what he can't possess he would destroy."

"If I thought that of him, I'd—"

"What would you do?"

"Well, I don't know what to do, that's the truth of it."

"You said you wanted to play detective in the matter, and so be of some use in the case."

"Yes, yes."

"Well, let Joe Spraker be your game. Make friends with him; be with him all you can, hear as much as you can, and be present as often as you can without his knowing it. You may be able to pick up something."

"I'll do it! I'll do it!"

"But you must take care that your purpose is not detected, for he is as wary as a fox."

"I'll fool him."

"And another thing—tell no one!"

"Not even father or mother. But, of course not; them least of all."

"I think I can trust you, Charlie. Take care that you find out just what men he is most intimate with, secretly, and maybe by the time the detectives get here, you will have straight information for them."

"I only hope he is the man!"

"Even if he is, it may be impossible to trap him; but we'll see whether my suspicion amounts to anything or not."

"How came you to suspect him at all?"

"Well, for the reason I told you, and for another, but I doubt whether you could understand if I told you."

"Then you don't go heavy on my understanding, eh?"

"Oh, I didn't mean it that way, Charlie; but you are wrong. However, I do not mind telling you."

"Needn't unless you want to."

"I will tell you. He was one of the first men to come to my call, when I gave the alarm, after making the discovery of the robbery and murder."

"That might be all right."

"Yes, that part is all right; but, when your father came, and urged him to take

hold of the investigation, he turned his guns right on me. About the first thing he did was to demand my pistol."

"I begin to smell mice now."

"Yes, and it looks to me as if he knew one chamber was empty, which I swear I did not, and he meant to show up the proofs against me at once."

"But how could he know it, Mr. Trillman?"

"That is just the work for you to accomplish, Charlie. Get proof that he did know it, and you will open these doors for me and allow me to walk forth a clear and free man."

"I'll do it, or give up the job."

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### PLAYING A CLEVER HAND.

Pat Conlon went out and bought a quart of rum, as he had declared his intention of doing, and, in buying it, he made his boast that he was going to give his cousin a warm reception and make him heartily welcome, and send him off in fine style before he went to work.

On returning to the shanty, however, the quart bottle was put up on the top shelf of Pat's little cupboard, unopened.

When Pat and Tim made their appearance, nevertheless, early in the evening, they were both royally drunk, apparently.

They went rollicking along the street, arm in arm, singing popular Irish songs, and made merry with every congenial spirit they came in contact with, dropping into all the popular resorts.

They drank a little, treated the boys two or three times, and were well received wherever they went.

The most popular place in Dollarville, with a certain class, was the Barrel Saloon, so-called, and there the two Irish cousins settled down finally to spend the evening.

Here, usually, were congregated the roughest class of the town.

They were not wanting on this night, for the place was well filled, and they were in the majority.

The two Irishmen made amusement for the whole room for a time, singing songs and cracking jokes at each other's expense, but growing boosier every hour.

Finally they were "not in it"; they had become, in the common parlance, "corned."

Only a little time before this, Joe Spraker had entered the saloon, in a disguise so thin that any one could penetrate it.

He had made other visits of this kind before, and it was understood that he was working in the interests of his office whenever he so appeared, doing a little detective work.

On this occasion he sat down by a table, alone at first, but he was presently joined by a rough-looking fellow, a stranger to most of all present.

About this time, Pat Conlon tried to get his cousin up and take him home, for Tim had dropped his head on his arm on the table and was snoring beautifully.

Pat was almost as drunk as the other, to all appearances, but he did manage to get Tim up on his feet.

And then began the fun.

"Begorra! Oi will take ye—hic—home, ye spalpeen, and Oi have to carry ye dhare!"

So cried Pat, as he reeled around and around with his helpless cousin, and it looked as if somebody else would have to carry them both, if either got there that night.

"Oi—Oi—Oi want to sit down," mumbled Tim.

"It—it is wantin' to—hic!—to break yure neck ye be," hiccoughed Pat.

"Oi—Oi—Oi want to rest."

And so they addressed each other in drunken thickness until finally Pat got tired and Tim had his way.

They had staggered around quite a little, and when Pat eased his hold upon his cousin the latter went down all in a heap on a chair, and Pat took a header under a table.

As it happened, Tim had dropped upon a chair at the same table at which Joe Spraker and his companion were sitting.

He rolled for a second, and it seemed about an even thing whether he would remain on the chair or fall off on the floor, but, with a lurch, he recovered and dropped his head on his arms as before.

"That feller is a case," observed Spraker's companion.

"Yes, and the other is not far from it, by the looks of things. I never saw Pat Conlon as drunk as that."

"Well, they are harmless. What wur you a-sayin'?"

"I was going to say that I will see to putting the notice on the door to-night when the coast is all clear."

"All right; and I will see that everything is all right with the gal till you git ready for her. Then it is to be understood that you are to pay me before I give her up."

"Yes; and you are to swear that no harm shall come to her."

"Oh, that is old! I have told you a dozen times that I would take keer of that part of it."

"How is she holding up?"

"Oh! she is bawlin' most of the time, woman-like."

"Well, it is too bad, but you see how it is. I must have her, and there is no other way open to me."

"You are a deep one."

"Yes; you ought to know how deep I am. If I ever hear of your breathing a word of what you know, the rope will go around the necks of you and your pards so soon that you will see stars!"

"I kin well believe it."

"You had better believe it. Now, let's see, do we understand each other in the game?"

"Yes, I guess so."

"You know what your own part is to be?"

"Sure I do."

"I will have Gorman let me meet you at the appointed time to pay the money and get the girl."

"Yes."

"I will pay you what we agreed on, and then I will bring the girl and the money both back, and tell my story. But, first, of course, there must be the little sham scrimmage at the cabin, in which you will allow me to do the heroic."

"Oh! yes, I kin afford to do that, fer money. But, in fact, you couldn't begin to whip one side of me."

"I know that, of course; but we will have it hot, and finally I am to master you and rescue the girl, and I will look a hero in her eyes, and if there is a spark of sentiment in her heart, she will regard me."

"And what about the other feller?"

"Which one?"

"Him in jail."

"Oh! I will either hang him or send him up for a long spell; there is no help for him, now."

"But, I hear said around that Gorman has sent for detectives."

"We will be done before they can get here."

"But we don't know where Deadwood Dick is. That is a thing that I am not quite easy about."

"Well, I would like to know, too, but it does not worry me. We have our eyes open for him. He could not come here without our getting onto him, and he would not fare so well another time."

"But, another point; suppose Gorman



sends a big force along with you, what then?"

"Why, you fool, that is one of the main points in the whole game. The notice I will put up will declare that only one man must come, or the deal will be off and the girl will be killed."

"Oh, sure!"

"And I will offer to go, and will go, and that will make a hero of me and insure my standing here for all time. And then, when some of the bank's funds are found in that secret place in Trillman's room, that will just put on the finishing touch, you see. Oh! There can be no miscarriage."

"Well, I hope not, for I want to get my slice out of it, and then you can bet I will have business in other parts, mighty soon."

"A fool if you don't."

Meanwhile, Pat Conlon had got upon his feet, and was at the other end of the room, boasting how he would walk that cousin of his home as soon as he got his wind, after the first effort, and thus he was giving Dick full opportunity for overhearing every word that was dropped.

They had played their little game exceedingly well, truly!

#### CHAPTER XV.

##### CLEVER CHARLIE.

Finally, Spraker rose and left the room.

He proceeded up the street, and was shadowed by a youth who had been awaiting his appearance.

It was Charlie Gorman, who was abroad without the knowledge of his father or step-mother.

The rascally official went up the street, in the direction of the Gorman cottage.

Charlie followed with the stealth of a cat.

Coming to the cottage, the man stopped by the side of the house, just outside the fence, and made a signal.

It was like the call of a night bird, which he repeated several times before there was any response, and, naturally, Charlie wondered what it meant and what was coming next.

Finally there was a slight tapping at one of the windows.

At that the man ceased his signaling and withdrew to the rear of the yard fence and stationed himself there in the deep shadows.

Charlie crept after him and secured a position surprisingly close to him without being discovered, and in that manner both patiently waited, the youth a-tremble with suppressed excitement.

Presently a soft step was heard and a voice whispered:

"Where are you?"

"Here," answered the man.

Charlie Gorman recognized the voice. It was that of his step-mother.

Had any one struck him a blow, he could not have been more surprised, and he almost uttered an ejaculation.

The woman came on to the fence, and the youth was in a position where he could overhear every word that was uttered, if they spoke at all above a whisper.

"Well, what is the word?" the woman asked.

"Everything is working fine," the answer.

"That is good."

"To-night will finish the work, or nearly so."

"Is she safe?"

"Perfectly so, and all right."

"I am glad of that. She must not come to harm."

"Oh, you need have no concern on that score."

"And what do you want now?"

"We must have a final talk."

"All right."

"I am going to pin a notice on the front door of this house."

"What for?"

"You would know if you stopped to think. It will be the demand for the ransom."

"Oh! I see."

"And, when I come in the morning, you must lend your voice to support my offer to go and pay the money and bring the girl home."

"Yes, yes."

"And then you will show the young lady the debt of gratitude she owes the hero—ahem!—the hero who has risked so much for her."

"Ha! ha!" with a light laugh. "Yes, I will magnify your heroic act, do not fear."

"I will bring not only the girl, but will keep the price of the ransom as well and return that to Gorman, and take it all in all, they will have to recognize my worth, to some degree."

"You are a schemer, Joe."

"Second only to yourself."

"And then the proceeds from the robbery?"

"That is safe enough. A little must be put where it will fasten the crime the more securely upon Trillman."

"We did not count on a murder, when we first planned it."

"True, but that is done now."

"You said you had to do it?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"He recognized me."

"Then there was nothing else you could do, of course; but I hate to see Trillman hang."

"I think he will have to hang, however, unless he sees fit to kill himself. It might not be a bad idea to give him the means for doing that."

"Cannot we plan his escape, instead?"

"Are you a fool? He is an innocent man, and he would never rest until he had proven his innocence."

"Well, well, I see we are bound, hand and foot."

"There is only one thing that worries me."

"And what is that?"

"The fact that Deadwood Dick escaped."

"Yes; I tremble every time I think of that."

"And, the mystery is, who freed him?"

"I cannot imagine."

"Nor I. But, Satan help him if he crosses our path now!"

"No such mistake must be made again."

"You can bet it will not be. How is everything here?"

"All right. I am playing my role to the fine point. I am all but crazed with grief. Ha! Ha!"

"You are a good one. Well, the end will come, and no one will ever suspect the part that you have played in it. Then we shall control riches, the thing we have always longed for."

"Yes."

There was some further plotting and planning concerning their work for the morrow, and when they understood each other thoroughly, they parted.

The woman made her way back to the house, while the man passed around the fence toward the front, and after him crept Charlie Gorman, who was hardly able to convince himself that he was not dreaming.

Spraker crept close to the fence until he came to the gate, and that he opened with the utmost caution and entered.

With the tread of a cat he went up the steps to the front door.

He could be seen, in the dim light, by any one who might be near enough, but he made no sound that could be heard ten feet distant.

There he was busy for a few seconds, after which he retreated as silently as he had approached, and hastened off in the darkness toward the town center.

Meantime, others had been watching.

Charlie Gorman did not give up his vigil, but shadowed the rascal still further, with almost the ability of a professional.

Spraker had an office over the office of the mayor of the town, in a building about opposite to the bank, and he went there, letting himself in with a key and closing the door after him.

Charlie crept forward and tried the door.

He took care to make no sound, and found that the door was fastened against any one who might try to enter.

It was better so.

Had it not been, the boy would have ventured in, and discovery would have been almost certain to follow.

And others were watching him, with even more caution than he himself could exercise.

After a while the man came forth.

No one was in sight, and, closing and locking the door, he made his way to the Eagle Hotel, where he lodged.

Charlie Gorman believed that he would see him no more that night, and was right in his guess, so he gave up his vigil and turned his steps homeward in an excited state of mind.

He had not gone far when rough hands seized him, a hand was clapped over his mouth, and he was a prisoner.

#### CHAPTER XVI.

##### DRAWING THE CIRCLE.

Meantime, what of Pat Conlon and his cousin?

Shortly after Spraker had left the room, Pat went for his cousin again, to see what he could do with him.

He was still so drunk himself, apparently, that he could hardly navigate, and the crowd looked on with a good deal of amusement, well knowing there was fun ahead.

Pat got hold of him and tried to waken him, but he might as well have tried to waken a dead man, almost.

He persisted, however, and finally succeeded in rolling him to the floor, falling with him as he went down, and the crowd appeared to enjoy it immensely.

The man with whom Spraker had been talking was looking on, and so the two men had to play well their parts in order that no suspicion might be awakened that they were not what they seemed.

Pat now appeared to get angry, and gave Tim a few kicks to stir him up and put a little life in him.

And this had some effect, for Tim opened his eyes, and with a little help from Pat, with another man holding Pat up, managed to get on his feet.

But he reeled and rolled as if the saloon were being tossed on a raging sea, and the proprietor of the place, to end the matter before any trouble came of it, paid a couple of men to steer them safely home.

These men had no easy time of it, but performed their task and left the two Irishmen lying on the shanty floor.

When their steps had died away, both sat up, in the dark.

"How was that?" whispered Pat.

"It was immense."

"And phwat is dhe next on dhe programme?"

"To shadow Gorman's cottage."

"Phwat is going to happen there?"



Dick told in few words what he had learned, and the Irishman was jubilant.

He could hardly contain himself, and Dick had to impress him forcibly with the necessity for his holding himself down, as he put it.

With little loss of time they were out and going in the direction of the Gorman cottage, but taking care to remain within the shadows, so as not to be observed by any one.

Hence, it can be guessed who the captors of Charlie Gorman were.

The boy was picked up and carried swiftly away from the place of his capture, a hand still over his mouth so that he could not cry out, and he was soon safe within Pat Conlon's shanty.

Deadwood Dick held him while Pat secured the door.

"Now, me lad," said Pat, "ye nade have no fear, fur no wan is going to harm wan hair av yure head. All we want av you is to warn ye to kape still."

"And keep still you must, too," added Dick. "I am your friend. We can help you and you can help us, but we cannot allow you to go alone on your own hook."

"Do you promise to kape still," asked Pat.

Charlie gave a grunt.

Dick removed his hand from over his mouth.

"I thought I was done for," the boy declared in a whisper. "I never had such a scare in my life."

"You might have been done for if you had got into that office with that rascal," said Dick. "Are you Charlie Gorman?"

"Yes."

"We thought so. How much have you learned?"

"More than I can believe."

"Then you doubt your own ears, do you?"

"It seems impossible."

"Nothing impossible about it. But, tell us all you overheard. What put it into your head to play detective?"

"Seeing you do detective work, sir."

"Do your father and mother know that you are out of the house?"

"No; I went to bed, as they thought, but I climbed out the window afterwards and began watching Spraker."

There was no light in the shanty, and they talked in guarded tones.

"What put it into your head to shadow him?" asked Dick.

"Mr. Trillman told me to do it."

"Ha! Then he suspects him?"

"Yes; he thinks he is the one who robbed the bank."

"And he certainly is."

"Yes, I know it, now."

"Well, your story."

Charlie told everything, withholding nothing, and the others listened with close attention.

"It is wonderful," said Dick, when the boy had done. "That woman is about the sharpest of her class that I have ever run up against."

"I can hardly believe it of her," averred Charlie. "She has always seemed so good and kind to Betty and me. But there is no chance for doubt, after what I have heard to-night."

"Well, what are you going to do," asked Dick.

"I thought I had better tell father."

"You must do nothing of the kind."

"Why?"

"That would spoil everything, and upset all our plans."

"Then what must I do?"

"Will you do as I direct?"

"Yes, if you are going to rescue Betty."

"We are going to do that, and, what is more, you shall have a hand in it, if you want to."

"All right; I will do just what you say, then."

"Well, you must go home, get into your room unheard and unseen, and it must not be known that you have been out."

"I can do that, if no accident happens."

"And can you greet your step-mother in the morning just the same as if you had not heard what you have?"

"I can try it."

"You must take extra care that she does not suspect you. If she does, I would not give much for your life."

"I think I can play the part."

"If you think you cannot get back into the house without help, Pat and I can go with you."

"I can manage it."

"Well, we will have to trust you, and from what I have seen of you I am sure you can do it if you take reasonable care. But now, another thing; you must meet Spraker the same as ever in the morning, and you must not let fall a word, or give a look, that can awaken their suspicions."

"I will take extra good care, Mr. Deadwood Dick."

"Then that is all, now. With what we know, and are likely to find out, Mr. Spraker's goose is cooked."

"I hope they will hang him in the place of Trillman."

"They certainly will."

The boy departed.

"A purty sharp lad, Oi take it," said Pat Conlon, when he had gone.

"As smart as they make them," agreed Dick. "Now, Pat, there is work for us to do, too."

"What is it, sor?"

"We must visit Spraker's office."

"Dhat will be no snap av a job, Oi am thinkin'."

"Maybe not, but it has got to be done. Have you a revolver?"

"A brace av thim."

"So much the better. I have a couple, and I think we can make it hot for anybody who jumps us."

"By dhe same token, we will make a thry fur it, begob!"

They made no light, lest it might be seen, but in the darkness of the room they felt to make sure that their weapons were in order and ready for business, and that done, opened the door and went silently forth.

In due time they were at the door of Spraker's office.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### FINDING THE PLUNDER.

Deadwood Dick had more than once opened a locked door.

He had no great difficulty in opening this one, while Pat stood by and kept watch for danger.

The door unlocked, they passed in, closing and locking it after them, and made their way up the stairs, where the Celt led the way to the door of Spraker's room, knowing which it was.

This, too, was locked, but it was opened as easily as the door below.

They were on the ground.

"Now, what about a light?" asked Dick.

"Dhat is dhe divil av it," assumed Pat.

"A light will be seen."

"We must take care that it isn't. Does any one sleep in the building, that you know of?"

"Divil a wan!"

"And I have noticed that there are shutters!"

"Yis."

"I take it that they are closed."

"'Asy to foind out."

They groped their way to the windows, and found that the shutters were all closed

in, and that there were curtains to the windows besides.

The curtains they pulled down, and when that had been done, Dick said:

"I think that will do; I am willing to risk a little light, Pat, and if it is seen we are here to defend the fort, that is all."

"Oi am wid ye, begob! Oi will stand to yure back till yure t'other side caves in, shure as me name is Pat Conlon, ochone! Oi want to make it a double sure case against dat skunk av a Spraker."

"We have got him on the hip as it is, Pat."

"Divil a doubt av it."

Dick now struck a match, and they looked around.

On a shelf was a lamp, and this they lighted, but did not turn its light very bright.

This enabled them to explore the interior of the apartment at their leisure, and while Pat carried the light, Dick began and made a thorough examination, not omitting anything.

There was a desk, a bookcase with books in it, an old chest, some boxes, and a few chairs.

That about comprised the furniture.

At the end of half an hour's search nothing had been discovered of any importance, and Dick paused.

"Begorra, it is a fool's errand we have come on," inferred Pat.

"I don't believe it," demurred Dick. "We have not struck the right spot yet, that is all."

"Dhen, be Hivvins, dhe roight spot isn't here, allanna!"

"It is here, Pat; we have proof of it."

"Where is dhe proof?"

"In what that boy overheard."

"Ha! ye are roight! We must go fur it again."

"Put down that lamp and lend me a hand with this desk."

"Oi will dhat same."

He did as directed, and the desk was laid over on its back.

Dick then took up the lamp, and examined the bottom of the desk with care, and an exclamation escaped him.

"I have found it! See there!" and he indicated a screw that seemed to hold a secret door closed, and in its place.

"By dhe powers! Oi belave ye are roight!"

"I know I am right."

Dick had a screwdriver attachment in a strong pocketknife he carried, and in a few moments the screw had been removed.

A slight pull then opened the secret door, and there lay revealed most of the funds that had been taken from the bank, tied in compact bundles.

"What do you say now, Pat?"

"Oi say it is dhe divil ye are!"

"Well, get me something to put this in and we will take it with us."

"Ye want a bag."

"Ought to have one."

"And impossible to get it! But, hould on!"

Pat pulled off his coat and vest in a hurry, and immediately his shirt.

He pulled the sleeves of this around the neck and tied them in a knot, and, lo! there was a bag that would answer all the requirements.

"You are a jewel, Pat!" averred Dick.

"Oi am a shirtless mon, begob!" was the response, as he put on his vest and coat.

Dick soon had the money all out of the desk and wrapped up in this novel bag, and the desk was closed as before and stood in its proper place.

So far, so good; but Dick was not quite done yet.

He examined everything around the desk, and gave particular attention to the paper.

He soon came across some that had a



yellowish tint, and, taking from his pocket the note which he had picked piecemeal out of the waste-paper basket in Betty Gorman's room, he compared the kinds.

The paper was the same!

He took the top sheet of the lot, which was a half-sheet, in the tearing of which a notch had been torn in the separated half, the piece still protruding on one edge of the half.

That ended their work, and when they had put everything in order, just as it had been found, they put out the light and made their way out.

A little later they were again at the shanty, where the money was carefully hid for the time being.

Next morning this notice was found posted on the door of the Gorman cottage:

"Reuben Gorman—Your gal is in good hands, and no harm has come to her. If you want her, you kin have her by payin' us five thousand dollars, and not a cent less. Send one man, and only one, with the money to Yaller Crick at oncet, and we will make an even change. If you try to do any funny trick, the gal will be killed.

"OLD BUSINESS."

That there was a new sensation can be taken for granted.

Gorman sent at once for Spraker.

"She must be saved!" Spraker declared, as soon as he had heard. "Not an hour—not a minute must be lost, Gorman!"

"But who will go? Oh, if I could only send a score of men!"

"But, there is the threat. You would risk the life of your child. I will tell you what I will do."

"What is that?"

"I will go, taking the money with me, and will bring the young lady safely home to you. And then, if I can get a clew, we will run them till we run them off the face of the earth!"

"It will be a big risk."

"I will dare anything to save your child, Mr. Gorman."

"You had better do as he says, I think, Reuben," spoke up the wife. "We are at their mercy till we get Betty safe back into our arms."

Charlie was present, taking in all that was said.

No one had a thought or suspicion that he knew what he did; he was looked upon as harmless by the rascally pair, and useless by the others.

"It is not the money I am thinking about," said Gorman, "but it is the galling thought of having to give in to them, and then allow them to escape unpunished afterwards."

"What else can be done? No doubt they have spies in this very town, and every move will be watched closely. If we try to play them false, they may kill your child," argued Spraker.

"Oh, Reuben, be guided by him," insisted Mrs. Gorman. "When we have Betty in our arms, then you can send out the whole town to hunt the villains down, but for my sake save Betty first!"

Charlie could have struck her with a good will, for her hypocrisy!

The notice had been taken down from the door by the one who had discovered it, Mrs. Gorman, and so but few in the town knew about it, or were supposed to know; but Pat Conlon and his "cousin" knew all about it.

Finally, Spraker's argument prevailed, and he went forth alone, with the sum of money in his possession.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### DENOUEMENT AND CONCLUSION.

Joseph Spraker set out alone, as said. Mrs. Gorman praised his courage, and

Mr. Gorman certainly had faith in his good intent.

But another had gone to Yellow Creek ahead of him, and that other was Pat Conlon, who had set out before daylight, and was already on the ground before Spraker arrived.

Pat had been chosen for this, because of his experience as a plainsman.

He had secured his horse at a distance, and was hiding at the appointed place of meeting before any one else reached there.

Finally he saw the man who had talked with Spraker in the Barrel Saloon on the previous night, and he, too, concealed himself while he awaited the coming of the messenger from town.

Pat had the big end of the stick now, no matter which way the game went.

If more than one man came, and the fellow did not choose to show himself, Pat could trail him to the place where the girl was hid.

Finally, after a considerably long wait, Spraker came loping along on horseback, and, when he had crossed the creek, he drew rein and gave voice to a signal that had evidently been agreed upon.

The other fellow came forth.

"Are ye all alone?" he asked.

"Certainly. I would not have come any other way."

"Well, it is money talks. Here is what I promised you for your share."

He tossed the fellow a package as he spoke, and when the man had opened one end and looked at the contents, he was satisfied.

"Come on!" he said. "I will take your word for the amount."

He led the way, Spraker following, and Pat Conlon creeping after them both, and in that way they went to a cabin hidden in the woods.

Spraker dismounted at the door and followed the man in, and in a few moments the girl prisoner was led forth. A horse with a side saddle was provided—the same upon which she had been compelled to ride to her place of captivity.

She was allowed to mount, before the fellow demanded the amount of the ransom.

"Now, for that money," he demanded, drawing a gun. "Fork it over, or you will never leave this spot alive!"

"Here is your answer!" responded Spraker, jerking out a gun himself, with a big showing of bravery. "Fly for your life, Miss Gorman; I will attend to this fellow, or lose my life trying!"

"No, no, Mr. Spraker! You must not fight! He will kill you!"

But they had already opened fire.

First Spraker, then the other, but neither seemed to be a good shot, and when they had emptied their guns they sprang at each other.

The struggle was long and fierce—apparently fierce, and Pat Conlon was secretly taking it all in, with a broad grin upon his homely face. And, too, for some moments, the girl looked on helplessly.

Suddenly Pat saw her look around, slip from the saddle, and, with wonderful quickness, she caught up a club and dealt Spraker's antagonist a blow on the head.

Instantly the fellow sunk down, limp and helpless, and Spraker rose up with a look of greatest surprise upon his face. Here was a new dilemma; the tables had been turned. Instead of posing as a hero, the girl was a heroine and he the rescued man!

"Why did you do that?" he cried. "I had it all my own way, and he was giving in slowly but surely."

"I feared for your life, Mr. Spraker. Come, let us hasten away."

"Don't ye be in a great rush about rushin' away wid dhat bla'guard," cried

out a new voice, and Pat Conlon made his debut. "T'row up yure hands, ye spalpeen, or, by dhe powers! av Oi don't bore a hole in ye!"

Spraker was white to the lips, and he obeyed before he could get over the first shock of surprise.

Pat leaped upon him, and he was a prisoner in a trice.

"Why, Mr. Conlon!" cried the amazed girl.

"Don't be surprised," encouraged Pat, cheerfully. "Dhis thafe av dhe wurruld has come to dhe length av his rope, so he has, and Oi'm dhe knot at dhe end av dhat same, so Oi am. He is dhe gossoon pwhat robbed tfe bank, killed poor Watkins, and did all dhe rest av dhe divilment!"

Perspiration stood out on Spraker's forehead in great beads, and he tried to stammer a denial, but he could not speak.

Pat made sure of the other fellow, and then said further.

"Now, Miss Gorman, are dhene any more av dhe same around here, d'ye know? Just throt them out, if dhene are!"

While they were talking the tread of hoofs was heard, and, after a moment of listening, Pat raised his voice and called out, in his hearty, cheerful way:

"Come roight along, me b'ys! Oi have them dead to roights, so Oi have!"

There was immediately a cheer, and horsemen came plunging through the undergrowth—Deadwood Dick, Charlie Gorman, and a couple of the colored boys from Gorman's stables.

The latter sent up cheer after cheer, on seeing their employer's daughter alive and well.

The prisoners were mounted, Pat Conlon took charge of them, and the others set out for Dollarville without loss of time, and when they rode into town, the citizens came pouring out from everywhere to shout their welcome.

Deadwood Dick rode straight with them to Gorman's cottage, where they entered before the fact of their coming was known, and Mr. Gorman and his wife were taken by surprise. The latter turned pale as death, but perhaps that would have been considered only natural.

Immediately, however, she recovered, to play her part further, and ran to embrace Betty, but Deadwood Dick interposed.

"We have had enough of that sort of thing, madam," he said, coldly.

"Wh—wh—what do you mean?" the woman gasped.

"What do you mean, indeed?" cried the banker, indignantly.

"I mean, sir," answered Dick, as he snapped a pair of handcuffs on the woman's wrists, "that this woman has been at the bottom of all this trouble and mystery, working your ruin to elevate her rascally brother, known here as Joseph Spraker."

"Good heavens! Reuben! You will not believe that against me—me, your wife! It is false—false!"

"I have ample proof to show how false it is," asserted Dick.

"Mr. Bristol, it is impossible!" gasped Gorman.

"Ask your boy there how impossible it is," suggested the detective.

"It is the truth," assured Charlie, forcefully. "I overheard all that she had to say to Spraker, at the rear of the yard last night, and—"

With a cry the woman fell in a faint, or a pretended one, and was picked up and laid upon a lounge, and forthwith Deadwood Dick told Mr. Gorman the whole story, from beginning to end.

There was no room for doubt.

James Trillman was promptly released.



from jail, and Spraker and Mrs. Gorman were put there in his stead.

So, also, was the other fellow who had been arrested, and the arrest of a third soon followed; and so the whole of the miserable wretches were put where they could do no harm.

At the trial they confessed everything, since there was no use of denial, in the face of all the proofs amassed against them. Spraker and his sister were both bad, and had been from the first. They had come, adventurers, to Dollarville, and their first scheme had worked splendidly—that was, the marriage of the sister to Mr. Gorman. But, that had not paid them as well as they had hoped, so they plotted further.

The reader has seen now the whole extent of their plottings, so no need to dwell upon it. Spraker was the one who had robbed the bank. He had first stolen the keys and pistol from Trillman, by entering his room at the hotel, and by exercising mesmeric influence over the sleeping cashier, had induced him to disclose the combination that would open the safe door. After the robbery, in which a murder had to be committed for safety, the keys and pistol were returned in the same manner.

The whole clique suffered the extreme penalty of the law, finally.

The town of Dollarville gave Deadwood Dick a great ovation, and the case was one that the citizens never tired of talking about.

Pat Conlon, too, came in for a share of the honors along with Dick, and the Prince of Detectives declared that he was as good an aide as he had ever worked with upon a case. Naturally, Pat felt considerable of pride.

THE END.

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